

AFRICA NEWS REPORT



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58 BIS, RUE LA BOETIE , 75008 - PARIS - TEL: 01.43.12.48.61 - FAX: 01.43.12.46.57
(<http://usembassy.state.gov/paris-ars/wwwhpres.html>)

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Zoellick Sees Progress on Advancing Doha Trade Agenda

(Meets with Africans, reiterates President Bush's commitment to free trade) (1060)

By Charles W. Corey

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- "Little by little we make progress" in advancing the World Trade Organization's (WTO's) Doha agenda -- a cause to which President Bush remains fully committed -- United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick told reporters February 18.

Following talks in Mombasa, Kenya, with African trade ministers, European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy, and World Trade Organization Director-general Supachai Panitchpakdi, Zoellick told waiting reporters, "We have hard work ahead, but I leave this session with a feeling of encouragement."

Paraphrasing remarks made earlier by Kenyan Minister of Trade and Industry Mukhisa Kituyi, who hosted the talks, Zoellick said, "There's a commitment in Africa, as well as a need, a recognition of the need for flexibility on all sides for us to move this [WTO trade agenda] forward."

Speaking for the Africans, Minister Kituyi said, "We, the African trade ministers who have been meeting here, together with some of our ambassadors from Geneva, are agreed that Africa and the other Africans -- the whole group -- the so-called G-90 -- have a purposeful interest in engaging on the way forward in the multilateral trade negotiations.

[The G-90 is the tripartite alliance of the African Union (AU), the African, Caribbean and Pacific Group (ACP) and the Less Developed Countries (LDCs) that forms a majority of the developing countries in the WTO.]

"We have made substantial progress in contributing to reverse the loss of Cancun," he told reporters, adding that the group has been discussing a priority agenda for the African countries in the Doha negotiations. Kituyi said the Africans are also interested in building in "a level of flexibility" that can allow the negotiations to go forward.

"In our discussions" Kituyi said, "we were very immensely enriched by the candid exchange of views between ourselves and Ambassador Bob Zoellick and Commissioner Pascal Lamy. We were reassured by both of them that, in spite of this being a rather tricky year with the impending American election and the change in the European Commission, the attention of these two critical players in the WTO process is not going to dissipate."

Reviewing the just completed talks in Mombasa, Zoellick said he had been "very pleased" by this and other such stops on his worldwide trip, and that he was leaving Africa "with a feeling of encouragement."

Zoellick told reporters that his talks the previous day in Cape Town with South African Minister of Trade and Industry Alec Erwin and with African trade ministers in Mombasa both stand as important parts of a "strategic dialogue" he had conducted in a wide array of world trade capitals over 12 days.

"I am in the course of a visit to a number of countries, following up on a letter that I sent in early January. And so far, I've been in Japan, China, Singapore -- where I visited with a number of countries from southeast Asia -- Sri Lanka, Pakistan, India, and, yesterday, Cape Town."

Zoellick was headed to Geneva, the WTO, and then to Paris before returning home, only to depart again for Costa Rica for talks with the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting countries.

Referring to his talks in Mombasa, Zoellick said, "Part of what this session enabled me to do was to brief and report to my

African colleagues some of the impressions ... that I found ... [during my worldwide trip]: that there's good, strong interest in moving ahead on the Doha Agenda."

Zoellick then responded to questions from the press. Asked about the cotton subsidy issue, he said that while in Mombasa he met with representatives from Benin and other countries concerned about that issue. A World Bank-International Monetary Fund meeting will take place in Benin in late March, he said, that will try to determine the degree to which cotton subsidies have adversely impacted the African development process.

"On the trade side," Zoellick told reporters, "we favor the complete elimination of export subsidies by all countries, and that includes the subsidy element of export credits." That is one core element that obviously is important for cotton producers, he said.

Zoellick said he suggested that actions might be taken with regard to cotton as part of an overall agricultural trade negotiation.

Besides agriculture, he said, tariffs are also an important and closely linked factor.

"There are some countries that are very big textile and apparel producers," and for that reason, he said, this may become even bigger [as an issue] with the end of the multi-fiber agreement at the end of 2004. ... That's an area we can work on together," he said.

The African trade talks in Mombasa, Zoellick said, had a "constructive tone."

"The only way that trade negotiations work is if there's a give-and-take, and if there's a sense of how people who are going to have to make difficult decisions on the domestic front will be able to gain in other sectors," he counseled.

"As you know, our position on agriculture is aggressive in terms of export subsidies, domestic support and tariffs," he said, "and so that's an area [where] we need to work together to create the context for the improvement on cotton.

Asked if progress is possible on the WTO agenda in 2004, which is a presidential election year in the United States, Zoellick reminded everyone: "We have two political events this year, among others. We have the elections in the United States; you'll have a change in the [European] Commission...

"I was just in India -- you're going to have elections in India ... [and] in South Africa. The point that I wanted to emphasize is that President Bush is committed to moving the Doha Agenda forward, and I believe we can make substantive progress that we failed to do in Cancun.

"But," he quickly cautioned, "I think we need to try to do so during the next months."

On the prospects for support of such progress in the United States, he said "it really depends on whether I can show that I can open markets and cut other people's subsidies. That will allow me to build the support to take on the subsidies reduction in the United States."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

Bush Remains Committed to Advancing Doha Agenda, Zoellick Says

(Zoellick meets with African trade ministers in Mombasa as part of world tour) (3620)

President Bush remains committed to moving the Doha Agenda forward, United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick pledged February 18 following talks in Mombasa, Kenya, with African trade ministers.

Speaking with reporters following those talks, which also included European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy and Director-general of the World Trade Organization Supachai Panitchpakdi, Zoellick said, "I believe we can make substantive progress that we failed to do in Cancun." Zoellick counseled, however, that progress must come in the next few months.

Reflecting on his talks in Mombasa, Zoellick said he leaves Kenya with a feeling of encouragement. "Little by little we make progress," he said.

Following is a transcript of the press conference held after the talks, which includes remarks by Ambassador Zoellick, Kenyan Minister of Trade and Industry Mukhisa Kituyi and European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy:

Press Conference

Kenyan Trade Minister Kituyi

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick

European Union Trade Commissioner Pascal Lamy

Wednesday, February 18, 2004

Serena Hotel, Mombasa, Kenya

Minister Kituyi: Ladies and gentlemen of the press, first of all may I thank you for your patience. I know it's very difficult; some of you have been here for more than 24 hours. And you waited until the end of our meeting in a dignified way and that was very helpful for us.

We have come to the end of four consultations. I want first of all, on behalf of the government and people of Kenya, to thank our visitors and friends, the African trade ministers who have been here, Ambassador Robert Zoellick, U.S. Trade Representative and Pascal Lamy, the European Union Trade Commissioner. And also the Director General of the WTO and the Chairman of the General Council, who have been able to join us, [unintelligible] and very much substantially enrich our dialogue here. A number of things have been authorized by the African trade ministers to mention here. I will make a brief statement, and then invite both Pascal Lamy and Ambassador Zoellick to make some remarks and then we can take some questions.

At our consultations in Mombasa today, we, the African Trade Ministers who have been meeting here, together with some of our Ambassadors from Geneva, are agreed that Africa and the other Africans, the whole group, the so called G-90, have a purposeful interest in engaging on the way forward in the multilateral trade negotiations. We have made substantial progress in contributing to reverse the loss of Cancun. We have been discussing what has been progressing as the priority agenda for the African countries in the Doha negotiations. And also importantly, looking to build in a level of flexibility that can allow the negotiations to go forward. In our discussions we were very immensely enriched by the candid exchange of views between ourselves and Ambassador Bob Zoellick and Commissioner Pascal Lamy.

We were reassured by both of them that in spite of this being a rather tricky year with the impending American election and the change in the European Commission that the attention of these two critical players in the WTO process is not going to dissipate. And indeed, [unintelligible] progress towards making

concrete gains in the negotiations is desired by them as much as by ourselves. We have also been reassured of the centrality of our development concerns at the heart of the Doha work program. During the deliberations, components of the road map towards Hong Kong have started emerging. And all the Ministers and delegations present committed themselves to making a contribution to building the political [unintelligible] for supporting the negotiations in Geneva and also importantly implementing the work of Cancun and setting the stage for maximizing the benefits of the development round, the Doha Round.

At this stage, I would like to invite Ambassador Bob Zoellick to make a few remarks.

USTR Zoellick: Well, thank you very much. And let me begin by thanking Minister Kituyi and his team for the leadership they have shown, not only in pulling this meeting together, but in working with many of their African colleagues to help make sure that Africa is fairly represented in this important process. And I also want to thank the Kenyan government for being very gracious hosts for this important session. And if I were to summarize what we've done in a phrase, I would with respect quote [a person's name in Swahili] "Pole pole tutafauler," and for those of you who don't speak Swahili means, "Little by little, we make progress." Roughly.

For me this was an important part of a strategic dialogue that I've been undertaking over the past 10 or 12 days. It's very important that 2004 not be a lost year for the WTO, as Minister Kituyi said.

I am in the course of a visit to a number of countries, following up on a letter that I sent in early January. And so far, I've been in Japan, China, Singapore -- where I visited with a number of countries from South East Asia, and Sri Lanka -- Pakistan, India, yesterday Cape Town. And this session allowed me to meet a number of African colleagues. And then tomorrow I head on to Geneva, the WTO, and then Commissioner Lamy and I will meet on Friday as I head home. And then within a couple of days I'm heading out to Costa Rica for a meeting with the Cairns Group, agricultural exporting countries. And so part of what this session enabled me to do was to brief and report to my African colleagues some of the impressions I had. And I will summarize that I found that coming out of this session, some responses to the questions I've been posing in various visits there's a good strong interest in moving ahead the Doha Agenda.

It's trying to get a sense of priorities which under Minister Kituyi's efforts and others I get a sense of particular African's interest and I've tried to ask how we can help. And that will be an ongoing dialogue.

We have hard work ahead, but I leave this session with a feeling of encouragement. And as Minister Kituyi said, there's a commitment in Africa as well as a need, a recognition of the need for flexibility on all sides for us to move this forward.

So I've been very pleased by this visit along with the other visits.

Commissioner Lamy: Thanks. Let me, my turn, say how much I welcome [unintelligible] Kituyi's initiative in having this meeting today. I think it's very important that an initiative is taken in order to, sort of set out, the African - G-90 negotiating position. And for this, this endeavor to frame a priority agenda for this group I think is very welcome. And I also take today's meeting as a signal on the G-90's part to embark on a sort of closer working relationship, negotiating relationship between the G-90 and us.

As far as Europe is concerned, I think the meeting we had was very substantive. It went beyond general declarations, beyond already known positions to address a number of issues on

agriculture, industrial tariffs, on development-related issues, or what we call Singapore issues in our WTO jargon, which have allowed me to explain the flexibilities with which the European Union has, which I have as a negotiator, in agriculture, in trade distorting domestic support, a lot of that in this negotiation. And I understand it's an important point for the G-90. In export support, where I can, zero export support for productive interests for [unintelligible] countries. I said [unintelligible] year on my suggestion that can provide for this. I don't have any preconditions on this list. It will remain to be negotiated, the timing of the phasing out to zero. On "Special and Differential" treatment and areas of concern to the G-90, obviously cannot afford the whole bunch of WTO initiatives for a number of reasons. I've made it clear that we are ready, for instance, to address small economies problems, land-locked economies problems, and that as far as industrial tariff reductions, we understand that the G-90 countries are not in the same position as, for instance, other developing countries like Brazil or India.

On Singapore issues, which is investment, competition, trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement, I have made it clear that following the discussions which took place in Cancun, I'm willing to have two of these remaining in the negotiations -- trade facilitation and transparency in government procurement, and two of these dropped out of sight, investment and competition.

So without entering into technical details, which [unintelligible] go to the substance of the agenda, and I feel I have a better sense of the feel of what your priorities are after today, which is very helpful because of course the next question and your question will be: "where do we go from here?" Well from here, we have increased the momentum for negotiations in Geneva. And I think we Europeans see it as in the coming weeks, trying to get where we should have been in Cancun and in my view this is very [unintelligible] by sort of spring time. And then in the remaining useful part of this year, trying to move this beyond where we should have been in Cancun, pending all these initiatives which have [unintelligible]. And I think there is ample scope for further negotiations between the EU and U.S., EU and G-20, EU and G-90. And I see today as the start of real negotiations between us and the G-90. And for this reason, it's welcome.

Minister Kituyi: Thank you. We'll take a number of questions. And you say which media house you are from.

Question: William Wallis, the Financial Times. Ambassador Zoellick, have you been able to move forward on the cotton issue? Have you brought anything specific to the table on cotton, and any other, kind of, sweeteners that bring the American position beyond what it was in Cancun, that was unacceptable to African countries?

USTR Zoellick: Well, the first part is that, we had a colleague from Benin today, which was one of the key countries in that, and we've been talking with them and with the other countries that have been particularly interested in cotton about their interests. And we are trying to focus on both the trade and development side. Let me just speak to the development side for a moment. We spoke today about a meeting that will take place in Benin in late March with the World Bank and the IMF and others to try to focus on some of the development issues.

On the trade side, we favor the complete elimination of export subsidies, by all countries and that includes the subsidy element of export credits. So that's one core element that obviously is important for cotton producers. We also discussed the importance of reducing domestic subsidies, or what trade people call, the domestic support, as part of an overall reduction. And

what I emphasized with our colleagues is that some countries have had a concern that if you reduce the overall numbers as part of a negotiation, that it might allow countries to increase for particular products as they lower for some. We support the provision, we not only support the provision that was in the draft text that would prevent that, but in addition we're willing to further for cotton. And so I suggested that we might do some things particularly related to cotton as part of an overall negotiation dealing with agriculture. And third, an important element is tariffs. There are some countries that are very big textile and apparel producers -- that may become even bigger ones with the end of the multi-fiber agreement at the end of 2004 -- that have very high tariffs in cotton. And so that's an area we can work on together. So I think it's only fair that you ask the others involved, but I think the tone on this was a constructive tone about how to move forward. I did emphasize that it's important for all products and items to be treated together. The only way that trade negotiations work is if there's a give-and-take, and if there's a sense of how people that are going to have to make difficult decisions on the domestic front will be able to gain in other sectors. And so as you know our position on agriculture is aggressive in terms of export subsidies, domestic support and tariffs, and so that's an area we need to work together to create the context for the improvement on cotton.

Question: [unintelligible] from the BBC. Ambassador, considering this is an election year, and considering politicians [unintelligible], maybe it's not politically expedient for subsidies to be removed right now. Maybe we'll keep talking until the elections are over?

USTR Zoellick: Well, I'm glad you asked the question, because that was one reason I sent the letter to my colleagues in January. And we have two political events this year among others. We have the elections in the United States, you'll have a change in Commission in Europe. I was just in India, you're going to have elections in India as well, actually elections in South Africa. The point that I wanted to emphasize is that President Bush is committed to moving the Doha Agenda forward, and I believe we can make substantive progress that we failed to do in Cancun. But I think we need to try to do so during the next months. Pascal mentioned this spring. My assessment is there needs to be work done until the spring, we really have until about the end of July. Now in the case of the United States it really depends on whether I can show that I can open markets and cut other people's subsidies. That will allow me to build the support to take on the subsidies reduction in the United States. But from the start, the proposals that we put forward, and obviously that required us to build support in our own country, could support that sort of package. So what I've been emphasizing throughout this visit is, trying to get a sense of the priorities that other countries have and trying to narrow the work. So this is one reason, as Pascal mentioned, there are topics in the Singapore, the supposed Singapore issues that need to be narrowed. I would go one step forward than Pascal would, and I would just focus on trade facilitation, because I think there remains an anxiety on that topic. But, Europe has made big moves, we'll see whether Japan and others can make moves, and then focus on the market access agenda. And then I think, we all have elections at various times, but I think we could get something done this year.

And I have to compliment again, as Pascal did, Minister Kituyi, because part of the challenge here is pulling together diverse groups of countries in sub-Saharan Africa. And taking your wish list and making it into a negotiating list. And that's the process I see going forward now.

Question: George Swallow. [unintelligible] you've really been travelling around. What is the one that all these places you've been travelling, what has [unintelligible]

USTR Zoellick: I think the number one topic is the need to resolve the agriculture issue. And, without getting into all the details, we've talked about some of that today. You've heard Commissioner Lamy talk about what he's trying to do on export subsidies. The key message that I've heard is we're going to have to eliminate export subsidies. As I wrote in the letter, I think it's only fair to the European Union, that if they can move in that direction, you have to determine "when" in the process, because they have to see the rest of the negotiation. So agriculture is key. There is also focus on other aspects of the market access agenda -- goods and services. And then finally, resolving the Singapore question. I think we're getting close in terms of narrowing that agenda. But as I said yesterday in South Africa, every country has to be brought along, each country has different interests. And so that's the process we're undertaking.

In Cancun the text on services wasn't very contentious because it was focusing on how to put forward more offers. The text on goods was not all that contentious, although there are various issues there that are related to formulas, sectorals and non-tariff barriers. So the key message that I'm picking up in various visits is -- resolve the Singapore issue question so that we can narrow our focus, and then let's work on agriculture. And what I picked up along the way is, we now need to have a combination of meetings in Geneva, expert meetings, involvement of Ministers to try to narrow the differences on the agriculture text. And I believe that's something we can do, as I said, in the timeframe of the middle of the year. It won't be easy, but I believe it's possible.

Question: Anthony Moreland, from AFP. Minister, as a representative of the G-90, I wonder whether you've heard anything of the problems that scuppered Cancun, are you closer to a resolution, farther along the road to Doha?

Minister Kituyi: Yes, very, very substantially. First of all, at home in Africa, and in the G-90, we set out what we wanted. But we did not build in any negotiating flexibility. And one of the self-analysis issues has been "how do we make progress from our desires, the wish list, to a negotiating platform." And that transition is critically important for this round to succeed. And we have gone a substantial way in getting there on that score. Two, we have been having anxieties as to what extent key players in the multilateral negotiations appreciate our concerns as being at the core of the development agenda of Doha. That we are supposed to be the main consumers of the developmental content of this round. And I'm satisfied that very substantial responsiveness has been shown to the matters, the issues that we think are important to us. Particularly our perceptions on what is the way forward in Africa, on the cotton question, on Singapore, on "special and differential" treatment. These are areas that are important to us. And I have a sense of close support and more positive flexibility both within the U.S. and the European Commission negotiating positions now. And I think this can be the basis for unlocking the process in Geneva, which is [unintelligible] very important. The political goodwill has to be there to inform the technical negotiations in Geneva. And substantial progress has been accorded on that score in Mombasa.

Question: Can I follow up, then is a Ministerial session within sight?

Minister Kituyi: We are looking at the different scenarios. Consultations are still going on between parties that are represented here and not represented here, about what's the best way to move forward. You assess, you know, what is the benefit of a Ministerial, and what are the [unintelligible] scenarios that are possible. We have looked at some of those today, and we're still continuing a dialogue on this score. For us and the African group, we have a major we have major African constituencies that were not invited to this meeting. And we have to go to them also and get

a sense of comfort and this level of ambition and this will inform the consultations this spring on the way forward.

Question: [unintelligible] I've just looked at the [unintelligible] on the Singapore issues?

USTR Zoellick: We favor including the trade facilitation issue.

Question: Could I follow up that question, Minister, what the African position is on the Singapore issues? Are you happy to move forward on trade facilitation, or are you happy to move forward on transparency in government procurement, as well?

Minister Kituyi: I said at the start of this meeting this morning that today's meeting was not a negotiating round. We were glad to open up the issues, the contentious issues to the European Union and the U.S. to see if they are ready to move, to make steps, concede some ground. But for us as a group we're agreed certain mechanisms and flexibilities, but I'm under extreme instruction not to expose my hand.

[laughter]

Commissioner Lamy: You mean not today.

Minister Kituyi: Not today.

[laughter]

Minister Kituyi: Negotiating flexibilities can only remain flexibilities if they are used in the negotiation, and that's the way I intend to use them.

Question: Can I ask just one more question. Commissioner Lamy also said he's ready to receive a list of products for the elimination of export subsidies. Are you also ready with that list, or are you any closer to creating that list, or do you even want to create a list?

Minister Kituyi: I first heard this from Commissioner Lamy, ten days ago in Mauritius. And since then I have been in touch with both Geneva and the capitals around Africa to see the reactions to this and the possible inclusions. So the [unintelligible] of that will inform how we move forward on this. But there is no doubt that this is an important step forward in facilitating progress on this critical question.

USTR Zoellick: They've been making a list, and checking it twice. And you know how the rest of the song goes.

[laughter]

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USTR Zoellick Sees Opening For WTO Negotiations Progress in 2004

(In 25,000-mile push to promote trade deal, agriculture remains key, he says) (430)

By Wendy Lubetkin

Washington File Correspondent

Geneva -- Near the end of a round-the-world trip to push for progress in World Trade Organization (WTO) negotiations, U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick says he has seen "encouraging signs that 2004 need not be a lost year."

At a February 20 press conference in Geneva, Zoellick said he had a "sense that there is an opening to achieve forward progress in 2004," but that it would "not be easy."

Over the past 12 days, Zoellick met with representatives of more than 30 WTO members during a trip that began in East Asia and continued through South Asia, Africa and Europe for the negotiating round called the Doha Development Agenda.

From Geneva, Zoellick was scheduled to travel on to Paris for a bilateral meeting with European Union (EU) Commissioner Pascal Lamy before returning to Washington and then meeting with agricultural-exporting countries in Costa Rica.

"Everyone I visited seems to have a genuine interest in moving forward, or at least not holding the process back," Zoellick said. "Countries are in the process of shifting from wish lists to what they really need, and from restating positions to problem solving."

Critical to moving WTO negotiations forward, he said, are agreeing on a framework for agricultural trade reform and abandoning most of the so-called Singapore issues: trade facilitation such as customs reforms, transparency in procurement, competition policy and investment.

"First, agriculture is absolutely the key, and we will have to commit to eliminate export subsidies to succeed," Zoellick said.

He said agricultural reform must also include substantial reduction and harmonization of trade-distorting domestic support plus increase in market access, including access among developing countries to each other.

On the Singapore issues, Zoellick said he believed negotiators should "simply focus on trade facilitation and drop the other three."

Continued maneuvering over the Singapore issues, he said, "will cause problems with the Africans and developing countries. We will not focus on what we have to focus on, which is agriculture."

Reminded that sub-Saharan African countries are demanding an end of cotton subsidies, a sensitive issue for the United States, Zoellick turned back to the need for eliminating agriculture export subsidies.

The WTO negotiations "will not succeed unless Europe eliminates export subsidies," Zoellick said. "There's just no way around that."

Developing countries cannot open their markets until they see export subsidies eliminated, he said.

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S.

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AEF301 02/18/2004

USTR Zoellick Addresses Nettle Some Farm Subsidies Issue in S. Africa

(Alec Erwin cites importance of U.S. commitment to open trade) (840)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- U.S. Trade Representative (USTR) Robert Zoellick stopped briefly in South Africa during a world tour he made to gauge opinion and address disagreements that arose at the September 2003 World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting in Cancun, Mexico, where developing nations objected to the continued use of farm subsidies by developed nations.

"Agriculture has been and always will be a key to this negotiation and we are going to need to find a way to eliminate export subsidies and the subsidy element of export credits," Zoellick said in Cape Town, where he met with South African Minister of Trade and Industry Alec Erwin on February 17. The two officials then held a joint news conference, a transcript of which was provided by the U.S. Embassy in Pretoria.

After their talk Minister Erwin pointed out that "as a single country, the United States is our largest trading partner." He also said: "We have had an excellent opportunity to get a really in-depth understanding of where the U.S. stands on issues. It has been a good meeting."

"I think it is very important," Erwin said, "that Ambassador Zoellick on the behalf of the United States takes an

initiative such as the one he has taken. It is very important that we have the major trading nations giving leadership and direction in these negotiations. It is impossible to achieve anything if we don't have that commitment."

Zoellick, an indefatigable traveler, made his Cape Town stop after visits to Tokyo, Beijing, Singapore, Islamabad and New Delhi. He next plans to stop in Mombasa, where "Minister Kituyi of Kenya has arranged a meeting of a number of countries from sub-Saharan Africa that not only I will attend, but Commissioner Lamy of the European Union and [WTO] Director General Supachai" will also attend.

Following his Africa stops, the USTR said, "I am going on to Geneva, the headquarters of the WTO, to talk to a number of ambassadors there, and then I will stop briefly in Paris also to talk to Commissioner Lamy. And then within about two days I will be going to Costa Rica because there is a meeting of the Cairns Group, the agricultural exporting countries, and that will give me a chance to meet a number of countries in Latin America that I have been seeing over the past couple of months but didn't have a chance to see on this trip."

Zoellick said "I think both the United States and South Africa want to try to move the international agricultural system towards greater reforms." He repeated, "We have always emphasized that the United States is willing to eliminate export subsidies, including the subsidy element of credits, because we don't really use much in the way of export subsidies -- that is something more used in Europe. We have had a subsidy element in export credits. And we are willing to take very significant cuts in domestic subsidies if we can get Europe and Japan to cut and if we can get some more open markets."

Erwin agreed that "Europe probably is the more difficult party in agriculture, along with Japan and a number of other countries."

The South African made the point that the subsidies issue is "a two-way process. If we open markets in the developing world you can't open them to heavily subsidized exports. In South Africa we have an open agricultural trading system but we do from time to time experience quite serious problems with subsidized exports coming in. So clearly you can't open further without there being the corresponding or commensurate reduction in those export subsidies."

In addition to getting Japan and Europe to end agricultural subsidies, Zoellick said, the United States is also interested in "getting some fair shot at some of the major developing country markets. And in this I want to compliment South Africa because South Africa has been one of the leaders in the developing world in terms of using liberalization of its trade system and it has benefited South African agriculture so it is a good model."

Describing what Erwin agreed was a daunting task, Zoellick said: "The reason why this may be a little confusing to follow some of the adjustments, is that together we have a challenge of bringing 148 economies around together."

"I don't think we will be successful," Zoellick said, "if we point our finger at one country or another. It just so happens a lot of our views are pretty similar on these issues, but there will be players that have political sensitivities, and the challenge is dealing with those political sensitivities but still moving forward the overall liberalization process. And that is really one reason while on this trip that I have tried to visit many different countries across the world and to add to the context in that way."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

U.S. Trade Representative Zoellick Holds Talks in Cape Town
(Sees possibility of progress on WTO issues in wake of Cancun)
(4740)

United States Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick -- in South Africa as part of a tour of world trade capitals -- held talks February 17 with Alec Erwin, South Africa's minister of trade and industry, saying there is the possibility of nations coming together and making some important progress in the wake of the September 2003 Cancun World Trade Organization (WTO) meeting.

Both Zoellick and Erwin spoke to reporters at a joint press conference following their talks in Cape Town.

Recalling a letter he sent out to world capitals prior to his trip, Zoellick said, "I set out what I thought [was] ... a common sense assessment ... of what we needed to do to move forward, and I emphasized some points, such as the fact that agriculture has been and always will be a key to this negotiation and we are going to need to find a way to eliminate export subsidies and the subsidy element of export credits."

In the letter, Zoellick said he expressed his "assessment that the so-called Singapore issues -- that new set of issues that had been put on the table -- were going to be too much of a problem particularly for a number of countries in Africa." For that reason, he said, "I suggested that we just focus on trade facilitation."

On his trip, Zoellick has visited Tokyo, Beijing and Singapore, where he met with a number of representatives from Southeast Asian countries and Sri Lanka. Additionally, Zoellick visited Islamabad, Pakistan, and New Delhi, India. He was to travel to Mombasa, Kenya, from Cape Town to hold talks with representatives from several sub-Saharan African countries.

Zoellick said that as part of this trip, he also will travel to Geneva, the headquarters of the WTO, to talk to a number of ambassadors there and then will travel on to Paris before holding talks in Costa Rica with the Cairns Group of agricultural exporting nations.

In his remarks, Minister Erwin said "I think both of us feel relatively optimistic after our discussion. We have some hard work to do to see if we can move this further. But it has been an important contact for us, South Africa, to re-establish an open line after Cancun with the U.S. and we have had an excellent opportunity to get a really in-depth understanding of where the U.S. stands on issues. It has been a good meeting."

Following is the transcript of the joint press conference given by United States Trade Representative Robert Zoellick and South African Minister of Trade and Industry Alec Erwin:

Embassy of the United States of America

Public Affairs Office, Pretoria

Joint Press Conference

U.S. Trade Representative Robert B. Zoellick

Minister Alec Erwin

S.A. Department of Trade and Industry

February 17, 2004

Radisson Hotel Waterfront

Cape Town, South Africa

Minister Erwin. Well thank you very much everyone. It is really a pleasure for me to welcome Ambassador Zoellick, both as the Ambassador, United States Trade Representative but as a friend -- we argue from time to time, but we remain very friendly and I am going to ask him to outline the trip he's made, a very important trip and a very important initiative in South Africa's view, of trying to establish contact across many countries. So I am going to ask Ambassador Zoellick to outline what he has been doing, say a little bit about our discussion and I will say a bit about our discussion as well, which has been a good one.

USTR Zoellick. Thank you Alec. Well as many of may know, I wrote a letter to my ministerial colleagues in the WTO in January that was based on my sense that in the aftermath of the Cancun meeting a number of countries felt we had missed an opportunity but they were somewhat uncertain of how effectively to re-engage. And so I wanted to stress that on the part of the United States even though it is election year as it is here, that we did not want 2004 to be a lost year. And that indeed I thought there was the possibility of coming together and making some important progress. And in that letter I set out what I thought were some, a common sense assessment I called it, of what we needed to do to move forward and I emphasized some points such as the fact that agriculture has been and always will be a key to this negotiation and we are going to need to find a way to eliminate export subsidies and the subsidy element of export credits. I also said that it was my assessment that the so-called Singapore issues, that new set of issues that had been put on the table were going to be too much of a problem particularly for a number of countries in Africa but others, that I suggested that we just focus on trade facilitation.

But I recognize that the points in that letter were just the view of one country and so I said that early in the year I want to try and visit a number of countries to be able to get a sense of what other ideas people had and how we might be able to move forward. So on this trip I have had a chance to visit Tokyo and Beijing. I then was in Singapore where I met a number of South East Asian countries; also the minister from Sri Lanka came to see me there. Then I visited Islamabad in Pakistan and yesterday I was in Delhi where I had a good meeting with Minister Jaitley. So we had a long flight down to Cape Town and then tomorrow I will be going to Mombasa where Minister Kituyi of Kenya has arranged a meeting of a number of countries from Sub-Saharan Africa that not only I will attend, but Commissioner Lamy of the European Union and Director General Supachai. And then I am going on to Geneva, the headquarters of the WTO, to talk to a number of ambassadors there and then I will stop briefly in Paris also to talk to Commissioner Lamy. And then within about two days I will be going to Costa Rica because there is a meeting of the Cairns Group, the agricultural exporting countries and that will give me a chance to meet a number of countries in Latin America that I have been seeing over the past couple of months but didn't have a chance to see on this trip. Now as Alec mentioned I think this was a very helpful discussion for me. As all of you know minister Erwin knows the subject matter very well and so it allowed us to get into some detail on some of these ideas, some of the topics that we have discussed with the G-20 on agriculture and get a sense of how we can move forward together, but we also discuss the goods and the services and the Singapore issues. And I think as Minister George Yeo said in Singapore, we need to find a way to try to take the discussions that various capitals have been having and the discussions that have gone forward in Geneva and try to bring them together perhaps in the summer of this year and see if we can establish a framework that we were unable to do when we were in Cancun.

So the discussions that we had today did not focus on our SACU (Southern African Customs Union) Free Trade Agreement as we both acknowledged that in some ways that really would not be appropriate since we are doing that with five countries not just with South Africa. But Flori Liser, who is Assistant U.S. Trade Representative for Africa, joined us in the meeting and she is here in part because we will be having our next round of those US-SACU Free Trade Agreements next week in Namibia.

Minister Erwin. Thanks very much Bob. And just to once again reinforce I think it is very important that Ambassador Zoellick on the behalf of the United States takes an initiative such

as the one he has taken. It is very important that we have the major trading nations giving leadership and direction in these negotiations. It is impossible to achieve anything if we don't have that commitment. We have had, I think, discussions in considerable detail which have explored various possible areas that we could make some movement across all the different groupings in the WTO, and I think our common feeling is that we should be able to particularly after contact with other ministers across the world, to try and find a way to get the framework this year. I think both of us feel relatively optimistic after our discussion. We have some hard work to do to see if we can move this further. But it has been an important contact for us, South Africa, to re-establish an open line after Cancun with the U.S. and we have had an excellent opportunity to get a really in-depth understanding of where the U.S. stands on issues. It has been a good meeting.

Just to stress on the bilateral agreement between the Customs Union and the United States. The negotiating teams will be meeting in Walvis Bay in Namibia next week. We are at the stage where we are looking at the detail of the agreement. So, as Bob indicated it is not appropriate for me on behalf of SACU to comment at this stage other than to say that we believe that the process is going well.

USTR Zoellick and indeed I will be able to meet a number of the other SACU ministers tomorrow in Mombasa.

Minister Erwin. Not too many questions because the Ambassador needs some R&R * Rest and recreation. A trip like this, I am surprised that he is even walking. Questions?

Kim Cloete -- SABC TV News

Where does this leave you with the U.S. Farm Bill? Just what are your perceptions especially with regard to agricultural subsidies? USTR Zoellick. Well first off without boring you with [unintelligible] details. It turned out that a lot of the expenditures that people have forecasted on the U.S. Farm Bill really did not come about, as we suggested. But we have always emphasized that the United States is willing to eliminate export subsidies including the subsidy element of credits, because we don't really use much in the way of export subsidies, that is something more used in Europe. We have had a subsidy element in export credits. And we are willing to take very significant cuts in domestic subsidies if we can get Europe and Japan to cut and if we can get some more open markets. And that is exactly a lot of the topic -- substance -- that we were talking about because I think both the United States and South Africa want to try to move the international agricultural system towards greater reforms.

The last global negotiation, the Uruguay Round, really just started that process so it is behind the area of goods. So our hope has always been that with a good package that we could continue to drive the internal reforms. Now the way that works is that our farm bill lasts for a certain number of years and so if we are able to reach an agreement sooner than Doha Agenda comes into effect, then we would have to incorporate that in our own domestic legislation. But there is support in the United States for doing that if we can get other markets open around the world. And the key for us is European and Japanese subsidies, opening European and Japanese and other developed markets, but also getting some fair shot at some of the major developing country markets. And in this I want to compliment South Africa because South Africa has been one of the leaders in the developing world in terms of using liberalization of its trade system and it has benefited South African agriculture so it is a good model.

Linda Ensor -- Business Day

I was wondering whether you could outline some of the elements of what such a framework would consist of?

USTR Zoellick. Well in some respects the framework text that was put together in Cancun under Minister Derbez' guidance with chairs of different groups, was in my view rather close to what most countries could come around to, with a couple of core exceptions. One was the so-called Singapore issues. And that is why I stressed in my letter that I think the best course is simply to focus on the one that I have learned over past months seems to be the most acceptable to countries, which is trade facilitation. Now trade facilitation really is nothing more than taking the existing rules in the, dating back to 1947 in the GATT for customs, and trying to help two-way trade in terms of removing impediments at the border, increasing transparency, helping. In a sense recognizing in the past fifty years there are huge changes in communications and transportation that allow products to sort of come in, in a more expeditious fashion. The key is global sourcing.

So, in many respects, and just to give you a comparison. The APEC [Asia-Pacific Economic Cooperation forum] countries, the countries of the Asia Pacific, a cooperation group which covers a wide range of developed and developing countries, had been working on trade facilitation for years as a cooperative venture, because it is something that really helps people to be able to have express delivery and move forward markets. But so the Singapore issues said I think we are going to have to get narrowed down and at least with our suggestion we focus on trade facilitation and put the others aside.

Two other core elements are goods and services. And there remains important work to do in the goods area but the text at Cancun, at least it is my sense, pointed in the direction of a formula for cuts, the use of what trade people call sectorals, but also dealing with non-tariff barriers. And Alec and I discussed some of the elements of moving that forward but I think frankly much of the text is one that many countries at least seem to be sympathetic to.

In services, which is of increasing importance for all our economies, what we simply need to do is to get more countries to come forward with offers. About forty have come forward with offers. You start to see South Africa being an important service exporter, and we talked about an idea I had about working with the World Bank to try to help countries understand more of some of the possibilities in services. But so what that would really leave is the focus on agriculture. And in agriculture there are really three core elements. These export subsidies which we and most other countries around the world believe should be eliminated. They are the most egregious form of interference on the market because you are not just subsidizing people to grow something but you are subsidizing people to buy something and this is particularly troublesome for countries as diverse as U.S., India, South Africa, because if we open our markets then we are competing with somebody in a sense who is paying you to buy the product.

The second area is the domestic subsidies, going back to this question on the Farm Bill. And there is a somewhat complicated scheme that talks about how you reduce them and make them less trade distorting. And then the third is market access for both developed and developing countries. So to wrap that together I think if we can get the key countries in the world to focus on trade facilitation in the Singapore issues, then our real question is, coming to terms on the differences on agriculture. And at least my sense after this discussion is that the United States and South Africa are pretty close on a lot of the views on that. But there are other countries that bring different perspectives and one of the questions is how do you bring 148 countries around to a common view.

Is that fair?

Minister Erwin. We would agree with that. I think that we were able to probe some of the specifics in a bit more detail which we

had partly done in Cancun and I think not being able to do subsequently is in the detail we were able to do it now. So a lot of this is fairly precise wording for example of concern to countries in the G-20 group, including South Africa very much, would be if you are reducing this domestic support, could you shift it, so move a lot of the support from one crop to another, which would have a disruptive effect. With ourselves and the United States we have a very common understanding of that but we would need more precise clarity from the European Union on issues like that. But I use that as an example to illustrate that within the question of domestic support producing it there are certain important aspects of that, that also have to be addressed in one or other way. Our view is that if we can continue the kind of discussion that Bob has been having across many countries in some way we can get this to move forward again. And as I have often said in South Africa that we were a lot closer in Cancun on agriculture than might have seemed to be the outcome. But the big problem was the Singapore issue and I think we would have shared the view that we should focus on trade facilitation. This is an area where we could do useful things, where some of the aspects of the World Customs Organization which now govern conduct between trading nations with regard to all aspects of customs documentation, customs procedure, some of these things could be usefully incorporated into what already exists and the GATT agreements to create greater certainty. And I think there is probably a majority view these days that, that is something we could deal with in WTO, that the other three issues we should at this point park somewhere else.

The Pretoria News

Can you say how significant a shift there has been in the years as you move towards these trade negotiations since Cancun. What would South Africa still want in terms of concessions from the U.S., and do you view the EU as the major stumbling block to reaching agreement at this stage, the EU's policy on agricultural subsidy.

USTR Zoellick. Which of us do you want to answer it, both?

Minister Erwin. I think that the letter that Ambassador Zoellick sent was for many of us a useful initiative because we would argue (I am not asking him to agree with this), we would argue that it placed the U.S. in its more traditional position in agriculture which makes it easier for us to discuss many, many aspects on that. So yes, the answer would be that Europe probably is the more difficult party in agriculture, along with Japan and a number of other countries. (Inaudible) ... Korea, Norway would be, Switzerland would be of the other countries that have similar policies on agriculture. So the more difficult negotiations on agriculture would be there.

I am not sure what you are referring to about South Africa wanting concessions from the U.S., in the multi-lateral context I think that we have been able to share many of the areas and probably there is not a great deal that puts us apart, as Ambassador Zoellick indicated on the agricultural issue. There is a lot of fine-tuning to do which we will also be able to canvass. So we do think that if we can unlock some of these nitty-gritty's particularly around the question of export subsidies, and this has been one of the key issues and it was important for us that the U.S. stated that these need to be eliminated, because that is the view we have, all of us.

How that is done, over what time, are some of the tough issues that we have to negotiate, particularly with the European Union. But it's got to be a two-way process. If we open markets in the developing world you can't open them to heavily subsidized exports. In South Africa we have an open agricultural trading system but we do from time to time experience quite serious problems with subsidized exports coming in. So clearly you can't

open further without there being the corresponding or commensurate reduction in those export subsidies.

USTR Zoellick. What I would just add to it, and the reason why this may be a little confusing to follow some of the adjustments, is that together we have a challenge of bringing 148 economies around together. And we won't accomplish the task if we get to 147 and a 148 can't move, whichever that is, whether it is Europe, or Japan or a developing country or the United States. And so what we are trying to do is point the direction of the things that through our experience we have concluded must be a key part of it and I have mentioned some of those today, the export subsidies and others.

But we have to respect the views of others and we have to try to figure out how we can bring compromise on that. So some of the things that -- the United States finds itself in a position where we generally prefer an aggressive liberalization in goods. We actually favor total elimination of tariffs, agriculture and services. But we are working with all parties to try to get a balance. Now one of the things that has made the WTO even more challenging is that you have some countries that are traditionally big players in the trading system. The United States, the European Union, increasingly South Africa, Brazil. Some play a more active role in trying to make this happen. Some like China are just coming into the system and so one reason I stopped there was I wanted to encourage them to play a positive role, I met with Vice Premier Wu Yi. I learned that I think they are willing to do that. Others just by their nature, like Japan, have been more cautious so we are trying to encourage them to play a role. But then we also have many other smaller economies, and many of which I will see tomorrow and which Alec deals with frequently in Sub-Saharan Africa.

And there are a lot of fears and anxieties out there. So part of this is explain to people, listening, trying to get a sense of meeting the needs. And this is a long-winded way of saying that I don't think we will be successful if we point our finger at one country or another. It just so happens a lot of our views are pretty similar on these issues, but there will be players that have political sensitivities and the challenge is dealing with those political sensitivities but still moving forward the overall liberalization process. And that is really one reason while on this trip that I have tried to visit many different countries across the world and to add to the context in that way.

Nick Dawes -This Day newspaper

Amb. Zoellick. I am not sure if you would be prepared to answer a question on the bilateral issues. But I was wondering on the question of non-tariff barriers whether the U.S. has any concerns about, for example, South African Government procurement policy.

USTR Zoellick. Well obviously this is in the bilateral issues. The United States is very committed to the global negotiations. But we complemented it with free trade agreements with either individual countries or groups of countries. So in the past month we have finished one with five Central American economies and one with Australia. We wanted to do a free trade agreement with the Southern African Customs Union in part because we thought it was very important to signal to Africa that there would be a special opportunity for countries in Sub Saharan Africa to integrate with what is still the largest and most dynamic economy in the world, the United States. And we hope in doing so to accomplish a number of things.

We hope to encourage the reforms and growth that the SACU nations have undertaken; we encourage additional integration among the SACU countries. As you know South Africa did an agreement with the EU when Alec and I talked about this he emphasized to me why it was important to do it with all five SACU countries. I think that was a very good guidance and I have been

very impressed with the commitment of the other SACU countries. Now there are many issues in this (inaudible) market access, government procurement, services, agriculture, and we all have sensitivities. But we are committed to this agreement because we think it is important for our countries and we also think it is important for Africa and the trading system because we hope that we can demonstrate a deeper degree of integration than one would normally achieve in the global negotiations. And there is one more point on this. If you look at U.S. free trade agreements, we are doing free trade agreements for Latin America, doing countries with the Asia Pacific, and we thought it was very important to emphasize that Africa is important to the U.S. future as well.

Minister Erwin. I just want to stress that this is a full free trade agreement so every area will be canvassed, and we welcome that. I mean if you look at the European Union Agreement, we dealt with government procurement, if I am not mistaken the U.S. has asked and they are quite entitled to and should ask what government procurement policies are with regard to black economic empowerment and we will need to explain those. And we will exchange views on U.S. procurement aspects as well. But this is what trade negotiations are about. Exchanging these views. And what is interesting is this is a very full agreement. I mean we are covering everything. We look at labor standards, we look at environmental issues, so it's a very wide-ranging agreement which we have entered because we think it will consolidate and establish our links with the largest economy in the world and as you know, as a single country, the United States is our largest trading partner.

USTR Zoellick. That is why we ask our colleagues when they are going to get it done, but they haven't given us an answer yet.

Minister Erwin. Okay, two more questions, if there are two.

Michael Hamlyn * Jacaranda Radio

I understood you to be saying that South Africa is in total agreement with the shelving of the Singapore issues. Is that correct?

Minister Erwin. Yes we have never been particularly active proponents on what we think complicates the agenda. We have said time and again that if South Africa has the capacity if we need to negotiate some of these matters, but we don't think it is a priority for the agenda. But I should stress that both Bob and I have indicated that we think that trade facilitation is something that could be dealt with. It is not something we are massively pushing for South Africa but we think it is something that could be dealt with and we have always been very uncomfortable with the idea that these four things should be packaged as one issue that becomes part of what is called a single undertaking. Because these are very different things, trade facilitation and dealing with issues such as competition are vastly different areas of law and process.

Minister Erwin. OK. Good. We need to give the Ambassador a break. Thanks very much.

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AEF202 02/17/2004

Institutions Not Culture Form Bedrock of Democracy, Wolfowitz Tells Africans

(Top Pentagon official cites Korea as example of institutional determinism) (930)

By Jim Fisher-Thompson

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- A nation's institutions rather than its culture or history are the building blocks of democracy because they are flexible and represent the broad spectrum of society rather than a particular group or set of customs, Deputy Secretary of Defense Paul Wolfowitz told a visiting group of high-ranking African military and civilian defense officials February 9.

Wolfowitz explained, "It was not so long ago, 20 years ago, when I was Assistant Secretary of State for East Asian Affairs that I heard people say that Korea had no history of democracy and that Korea was incapable of democracy. I could cite that as just one of dozens of examples from Germany to Poland to Japan to Turkey and now, hopefully, to Iraq, where people have said that the history of country X or people X had no history of democracy and therefore we could not expect it of them. I don't believe that's true."

Actually, when one looks at "the differences in East Asia," for example between communist countries like North Korea and Vietnam and the Asian Tigers, "it's not differences in history, it's not differences in culture, it's differences in [political] institutions" and whether markets are free or state-controlled that seems to count, he averred.

The number two civilian official at the Pentagon made his comments during the annual Senior Leaders Seminar sponsored by the Africa Center for Strategic Studies (ACSS) held in Washington February 8-20. The study center invited more 120 military officers and civilian defense officials from 44 African nations to participate in workshops ranging from defense budgeting to examining the proper role of a military in a democratic society.

Wolfowitz told his audience, "We do believe that the militaries of African countries can and must attain a higher degree of professionalism, one that is better suited to the challenges of the 21st Century. Indeed, I think it is part of a broader effort ... of building and strengthening African institutions" that America is determined to follow on the continent.

"That is why we consider this seminar important for us, so that we can help to provide you, key leaders of friendly countries, the intellectual space to think about and discuss the concepts that underpin those efforts," said Wolfowitz.

After working on foreign policy issues for more than 30 years inside and outside government, Wolfowitz, a former dean at the Johns Hopkins University School of Advanced International Studies (SAIS), said, "One of the things that I have come to be enormously impressed with is the importance of institutions.

"Indeed, while one can't help as a student of history to recognize the importance of history, and as an amateur anthropologist -- I emphasize the word amateur -- to recognize the importance of culture, I emphatically disagree with those people who apply a kind of historical determinism or cultural determinism to the future of countries.

"While I recognize the power of culture," Wolfowitz said, "I remember reading ... in the late 1950s and early 1960s accounts about [South] Korea" as "a hopeless basket case." People said it was "riddled with corruption and burdened with a Confucian culture -- yes, with a Confucian culture that taught that gentlemen don't work ... that the true gentleman is a scholar who doesn't dirty his hands with manual labor."

Ironically, after South Korea's economy took off in the 1970s and 80s and it became one of the "Asian Tigers," Wolfowitz

said, analysts claimed it was that same Confucian influence that was "the source of all that energy and industry" that produced "the South Korean economic miracle, indeed, that produced economic miracles in Taiwan and Singapore and Hong Kong" as well.

"The difference 20 to 30 years ago between Hong Kong and Taiwan and Singapore on the one hand with their Confucian Chinese cultures and rapidly growing economies and the economy of mainland China, which was stagnating in the 1970s, had nothing to do with history, nothing to do with culture, and everything to do with institutions," he said.

"Indeed, it was Deng Xiaoping, I believe, who recognized that if they wanted to maintain stability in mainland China they better get on with changing their institutions. And as the mainland has changed, it has progressed also," Wolfowitz said.

To illustrate the differences between the two Koreas -- communist north and democratic south -- Wolfowitz said, "If you look at a satellite photograph of the Korean Peninsula taken at night you see this stunning display of light covering the southern half of the peninsula. You look at the northern half of the peninsula and there's one little spot of light which is Pyongyang." The difference between North Korea and South Korea has nothing to do with history. It has nothing to do with culture. It has everything to do with institutions."

Similarly, Wolfowitz told the ACSS audience, "I believe that strengthening institutions in Africa has got to be the key to moving forward. And it seems to me as an observer at a distance, that Africa is now at a crossroads in political, military and economic terms. The programs of the NDU Africa Center are a key part of the Department of Defense's efforts on the African continent to professionalize militaries in Africa, to develop militaries that are subject to civilian control, to educate civilian authorities about the role of the military and of democracy, and to help our department enhance national and regional capacity for peacekeeping and humanitarian relief operations."

(The Washington File is a product of the Bureau of International Information Programs, U.S. Department of State. Web site: <http://usinfo.state.gov>)

AEF504 02/20/2004

Massive Polio Immunization Program to Begin in West Africa (10 countries strive to inoculate 63 million children) (1290)

A massive polio immunization campaign gets under way in West Africa February 23, as 10 nations attempt to vaccinate 63 million children over a few days time. The effort will be the latest push in an international public health initiative to eradicate polio by the end of this year, according to a press release from the Global Polio Eradication Initiative (GPEI).

The GPEI is a joint effort of the World Health Organization (WHO), the U.S. Centers for Disease Control and Prevention, the U.N. Children's Fund, and the private non-profit service organization Rotary International. Organized in the 1980s, the coalition set a goal to eliminate polio by 2005.

Significant progress has been made in reducing the number of cases of this crippling and sometimes fatal disease, but the virus is still appearing in several regions, notably West and Central Africa. In recent months, polio cases have reappeared in several African nations that had previously rid themselves of the disease.

"The disease is now threatening to make a comeback, and the whole continent is on the brink of reinfection unless these campaigns stop the further spread of the virus," said Dr. Ebrahim Samba, WHO Regional Director for the African Region. "Africa has proved it can stop polio -- now is the time to finish the job."

Driven by unfounded doubts about the safety of the polio vaccine, Nigeria suspended regular immunization drives in some of its states. The GPEI dismisses those concerns as rumors and maintains that

the suspension of immunizations is what allowed polio to resurface in seven West and Central African nations thought to be polio-free and put millions more at risk.

Following is the text of the WHO press release:

World Health Organization

U.N. Children's Fund

Rotary International

Centers for Disease Control and Prevention

Joint Press Release

West Africa mobilizes for final assault against polio

63 million children to be immunized across 10 countries as Nigerian outbreak threatens African success story

20 FEBRUARY 2004 GENEVA -- One month after an emergency meeting of Health Ministers committed to end polio transmission in 2004, African countries are responding with a massive, synchronized polio immunization campaign, aiming to vaccinate 63 million children over the next few days.

From 23 February, 10 countries will hold simultaneous polio immunization campaigns, targeting 63 million children in Benin, Burkina Faso, Cameroon (20 February), Central African Republic, Chad (joining in March), Ghana, Niger, Nigeria, Ivory Coast and Togo. Political, religious and traditional leaders will team up to launch the activities, and tens of thousands of vaccinators will go house-to-house over three days to administer the vaccine directly to every child.

In recent months, polio has again spread across west and central Africa, paralyzing children in seven previously polio-free countries -- most recently in the Central African Republic -- and putting millions more at risk. But partners in the Global Polio Eradication Initiative say that if upcoming campaigns over the next several months reach every child, polio in Africa could be stopped in its tracks in 2004.

"After eight years of incredible collaboration and investment, Africa is standing on the verge of a well-deserved triumph in public health," said Dr Ebrahim Samba, WHO Regional Director for the African Region. "But the disease is now threatening to make a comeback, and the whole continent is on the brink of re-infection unless these campaigns stop the further spread of the virus. Africa has proved it can stop polio -- now is the time to finish the job."

Progress in polio eradication has been one of Africa's greatest achievements in public health. The campaign to "Kick Polio Out of Africa," launched in 1996 by Nelson Mandela, other African leaders, and now championed by Professor Alpha Omar Konar?, Chairperson of the Commission of the African Union, has cut polio cases down from 205 children being paralyzed every day to 388 during the entire year in 2003. Polio immunization has brought "Days of Tranquillity" to countries torn apart by conflict, turning civil war into ceasefire and combatants into bodyguards to allow vaccinators to reach children in safety

"Africa's challenges are matched only by its potential," said Rima Salah, UNICEF's Regional Director for West and Central Africa. "Before this new wave of cases, Africa had made the most rapid progress of any continent to secure a polio-free future for its children," she said. "It would be an unspeakable tragedy to allow the virus to slip back in now. National and community leaders must take a stand to stop the spread of this disease and ensure a victory over polio for the entire continent."

Nigeria's suspension of immunization campaigns in key northern states, and in particular Kano, remains the greatest

challenge -- and the greatest opportunity -- for a quick end to polio in Africa. Until mid-2003, Nigeria was part of Africa's polio success story, with only a few northern states still endemic with the virus and Lagos, Africa's most densely populated city, polio-free for over two years. The suspension of immunization campaigns in Kano and the subsequent outbreak of polio in that area was fuelled by unfounded rumours about the safety of polio vaccine. This is in stark contrast to the substantial support polio eradication has received from scientific and religious bodies, and multilateral institutions around the world. In October 2003, the Organization of the Islamic Conference (OIC) unanimously resolved to eradicate polio by the end of 2004. Further to this commitment the United Arab Emirates (UAE) recently announced the first pledge of what will be a multi-million dollar contribution by Islamic Gulf countries.

The contribution from the UAE comes at a critical time for the campaign, as the spread of the virus in west Africa continues to drain the Global Polio Eradication Initiative of its already limited resources. The partnership is short US\$ 130 million, funds urgently needed for activities through 2005, an amount that increases as more countries become infected.

With global eradication in sight and as west and central Africa embarks on its most critical immunization campaigns ever, Jonathan Majiyagbe, President of Rotary International, appealed directly to communities to immunize their children. "The Secretary General of the United Nations called polio eradication æa shining model of how we can come together against a common enemy of mankind" Majiyagbe said. "Polio is our common enemy, but in some African communities, fear and misinformation about the polio vaccine has become as deadly as any disease. The polio vaccine is a safe and essential protection for children. We must not allow these unfounded rumours to come between our children and their health."

The Global Polio Eradication Initiative is spearheaded by WHO, Rotary International, the US Centers for Disease Control and Prevention and UNICEF. The poliovirus is now circulating in only six countries, down from over 125 when the Global Polio Eradication Initiative was launched in 1988. The six countries with indigenous wild poliovirus are: Nigeria, India, Pakistan, Niger, Afghanistan and Egypt.

The polio eradication coalition includes governments of countries affected by polio; private foundations (e.g. United Nations Foundation, Bill & Melinda Gates Foundation); development banks (e.g. the World Bank); donor governments (e.g. Australia, Austria, Belgium, Canada, Denmark, Finland, France, Germany, Ireland, Italy, Japan, Luxembourg, the Netherlands, New Zealand, Norway, the Russian Federation, the United Kingdom and the United States of America); the European Commission; humanitarian and nongovernmental organizations (e.g. the International Red Cross and Red Crescent societies) and corporate partners (e.g. Aventis Pasteur, De Beers). Volunteers in developing countries also play a key role; 20 million have participated in mass immunization campaigns.

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Pentagon Helping Other Militaries Build AIDS Prevention Programs

(Program's current focus on Africa expanding to Asia and Pacific Rim) (810)

By Bruce Greenberg

Washington File Staff Writer

Washington -- HIV/AIDS is an international social and political calamity, but as it has impacted militaries around the world, it has evolved into a threat to the security of nations everywhere, says Dr. Richard Shaffer, Director of the Department of Defense's AIDS Prevention Program.

For this reason, helping to halt the spread of AIDS infections among the world's militaries is a key objective of the Defense Department's growing military liaison with other countries, according to Shaffer.

"By offering [our] assistance to foreign militaries in establishing or enhancing their HIV/ AIDS

education and preventative programs, we feel that the U.S. military can contribute toward the curtailment of the [global] pandemic and at the same time foster the cause of international security around the world," he says.

Representatives from the Africa Center for Strategic Studies and the United Nations Department of Peacekeeping Operations joined Shaffer February 11 on a Center for Strategic and International Studies (CSIS) panel, "Addressing the HIV/AIDS Threat to Militaries and Peacekeeping Missions."

Shaffer said the program, now into its fourth year, has received \$35 million from Congress to assist partnering militaries around the world.

"Our mission," he said, "is very simple: to reduce the incidence of HIV [infection] among uniformed personnel, beginning with the nations of sub-Saharan Africa, and with FY04, to include other countries with the objective of assisting in the development and implementation of HIV prevention programs."

He further emphasized that this is not a project that merely overlays a U.S. military program onto other armies but "a method of further enhancing a targeted nation's existing HIV prevention program in any way possible."

In terms of what the U.S. military can provide in this effort, Shaffer said, "there are elements of communication and coordination to market mass-awareness campaigns in the media. We look at testing. We can train the trainers. There are issues of policy. What do we do with our own HIV-infected members? These are points of interest often not applicable to other militaries, but something we can help with in terms of policy development.

"We will also work with many other aspects of an HIV prevention program, such as managing other sexually-transmitted infections, occupation and exposure management, and helping measure the effectiveness of a [particular] program."

Shaffer did stress that the U.S. military does not provide anti-retroviral therapy as part of its program. "This is still the case," he said. "Even though the State Department has now made more resources available for such issues, but it is not currently true with the Department of Defense." Nonetheless, Shaffer stressed, "We are now fully engaged with the State Department's global AIDS coordinator's office and with the president's AIDS initiative. We also hope to continue our emphasis in Africa and to further our partnerships there to help advance HIV prevention programs in the military."

Describing how the program is implemented, Shaffer explained that the Defense Department approaches a military that has initiated a prevention program to see if assistance is needed to develop the program. If the answer is yes, "they must show us what

their program is, and based on a review of that program's objectives, we can match that plan with what we can provide in assistance."

Shaffer noted that the next area of focus will be on nations on the Pacific Rim and in central Asia, so in a few weeks his staff will be meeting with their Russian and Indian counterparts.

"But make no mistake that our African partners are where our priorities are right now," he said. "We are presently involved with 27 African militaries, providing HIV test kits, as well as helping them with their overall comprehensive HIV prevention programs."

Testing, he noted, "is one of the keys for prevention...because individuals must know their infection status in order to bring on board the most effective prevention message, which is a key component of our efforts."

"We want other militaries to recognize that this is not just a military-specific issue, not just a medical issue, but for everybody in the military -- as well as in civilian life -- to worry about, and this is what we ultimately are striving for."

Thus far, Shaffer reported, the program has produced far-reaching results in nation-to-nation cooperation and in civilian-military cooperation on HIV prevention, especially in respective health and disease prevention efforts

And he said it has also helped in setting up voluntary testing and counseling centers, in disseminating information through the media and Internet, in providing laboratory infrastructure, and in getting other organizations to realize that military issues of health and disease prevention are the same as those affecting civilian populations.

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Rep. Payne Pays Tribute to Former CCA Head David Miller
(Eulogizes Miller before Congress) (610)

In a February 10 speech before Congress, Representative Donald Payne (Democrat of New Jersey) paid tribute to David Miller, former executive director of the Corporate Council on Africa (CCA), who recently died of cancer.

Payne, a former head of the Congressional Black Caucus, praised Miller as a man who "spent his lifetime" working to strengthen U.S.-Africa relations.

Following is the transcript of Payne's remarks, taken from the Congressional Record:

Mr. PAYNE. Mr. Speaker, I rise before this body of Congress and this Nation today to pay tribute to the passing of a man who spent his lifetime seeking to expand trade and investment ties between the United States and Africa. David H. Miller, of Silver Spring, Maryland, and originally from the state of Michigan, passed away on February 2 following a year-long battle with cancer. As his family, relatives, and friends mourn their loss, I would like to recognize a few of his many achievements here today.

The son of Mr. and Mrs. William P. Miller of Farmington Hills, Michigan, Mr. Miller received a Bachelor's degree in Political Science from George Washington University and a Masters degree in Business Administration with a concentration on finance from the Virginia Polytechnic Institute and State University. Mr. Miller worked for the public relations company of Black, Manafort, Stone & Kelly as a Research Associate and for Congressman Mark Siljander as a Legislative Assistant for Foreign Affairs. Thereafter, Mr. Miller was the Desk Officer for South Africa, Angola, and Namibia at the U.S. Agency for International Development. Mr.

Miller then served as the Senior Associate for Africa at the Overseas Private Investment Corporation (OPIC), where he led over 140 U.S. companies on investment missions to 16 African countries.

Mr. Miller helped to create the Corporate Council on Africa, and served as its first Executive Director from May 1993 to June 1999. At the Council, Miller was the principal liaison between the Council staff and more than 210 corporate and individual members. Mr. Miller was responsible for advising member companies on trade and investment activities in Africa; outreach to African government and private sector leaders; U.S. executive and legislative activities relating to African issues; and projects before international financial institutions such as the World Bank Group and the African Development Bank. Under his direction, the Corporate Council on Africa grew from an organization with six members, a limited budget, and one employee to an organization of over 210 members, an annual budget in excess of \$3 million, and fourteen employees.

Mr. Miller formed AfricaGlobal, and served as its Managing Director and Director of Government Affairs. He was responsible for handling the government clients and the governmental affairs of AfricaGlobal's corporate clients. Mr. Miller advised government clients on how to best communicate and create positive relationships with the international private sector and political leaders. Mr. Miller had extensive experience in corporate affairs and communications, and was the speechwriter for AfricaGlobal's clientele.

David H. Miller worked with great dedication in advancing relations between African nations and the United States, and is certainly deserving of praise before this body today.

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